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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to identify the types and uses of computer hardware and software in adult and community education programs in Florida. Information was gathered through a survey instrument developed for the study and mailed to 100 adult and community education directors and adult literacy center coordinators (92 surveys were returned). The results of the survey showed the following: (1) 63 percent use IBM computers, 52 percent, IBM-compatibles, 51 percent Apple IIs, 34 percent Apple Macintosh, and 21 percent others (respondents reported use of more than one type of computer); (2) 87 percent use 5.25 inch disks, although 67 percent have 3.5 inch disk capabilities; (3) WordPerfect was the most popular software package (63 percent), although Excel, Lotus, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Works, Dbase, and MacWrite were also used; (4) the most significant uses of computers were for instructional programs (79 percent), record keeping (56 percent), correspondence (41 percent), registration (36 percent), desktop publishing (33 percent), and electronic communication (15 percent); (5) less than 25 percent of the students in the programs were using computers; (6) the most significant barrier found by respondents (78 percent) is lack of funding for hardware; (7) 91 percent of the respondents supported the usefulness of computers as instructional tools. The study concluded that computers should be used more widely in adult basic education and that funding should be sought. (The report includes a glossary of 13 computer terms and the survey instrument.) (KC)

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Report

A SURVEY OF COMPUTER USAGE IN ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN FLORIDA

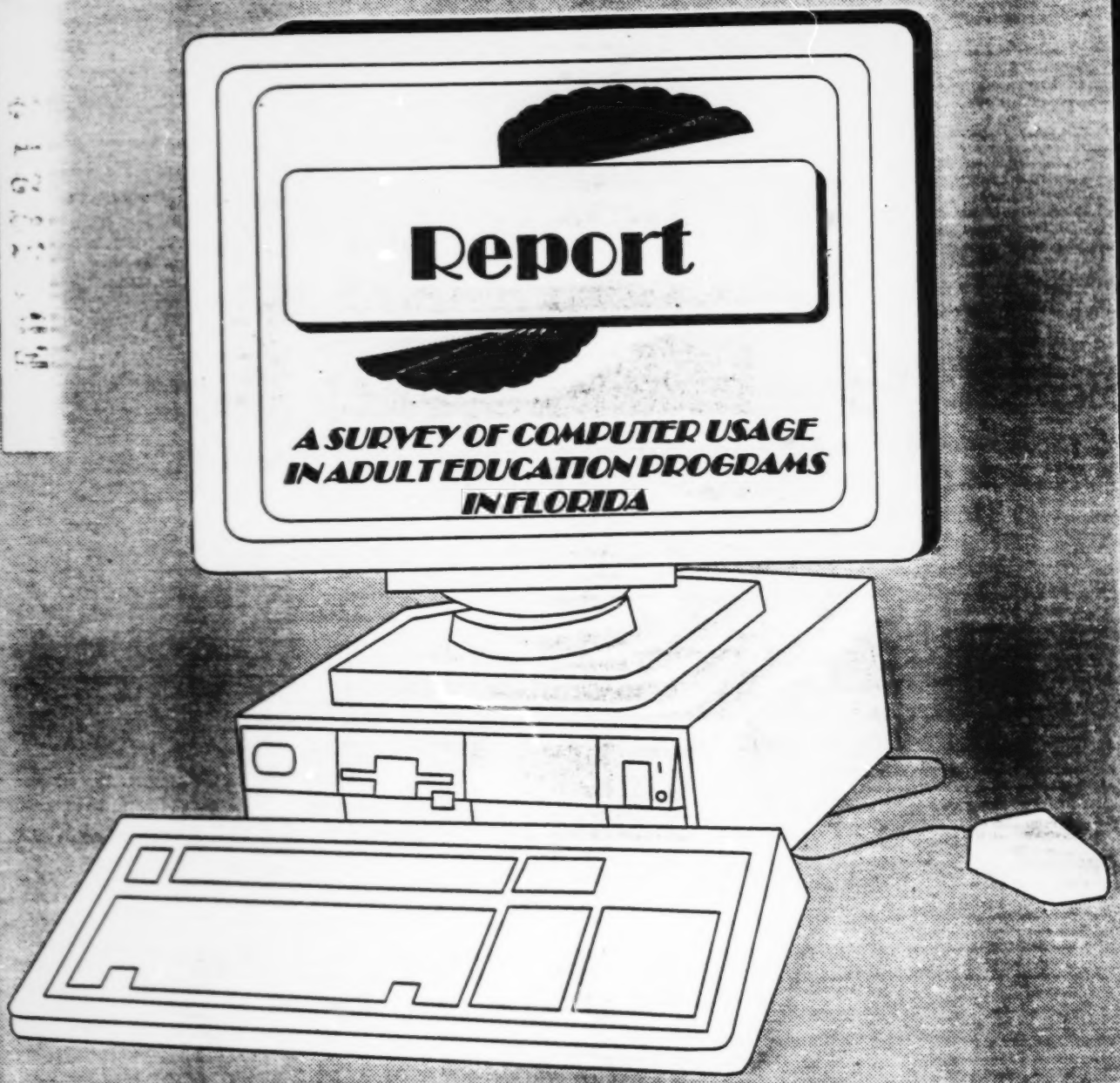

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Table of Contents

Alachua 1
Baker 3
Bay 4
Brevard 5
Broward 6
Calhoun 18
Charlotte 19
Dade 20
Duval 38
Escambia 39
Flagler 40
Franklin 41
Gilchrist 42
Glades 43
Gulf 44
Hamilton 45
Hardee 46
Hernando 47
Hillsborough 48
Indian River 50
Jackson 51
Lafayette 52
Leon 53
Madison 55
Nassau 58
Okaloosa 59
Okeechobee 60
Palm Beach 61
Pasco 62
Polk 64
Putnam 66
Sarasota 67
Sumter 68
Suwannee 69
St. Johns 70
Taylor 71
Volusia 72
Wakulla 73
Walton 74

A Survey of Computer Usage in Adult Education Programs

The purpose of this study was to identify the types and uses of computer technology (hardware and software) found in Adult and Community Education programs in Florida. In addition, a directory of computer usage will be printed and disseminated to practitioners.

METHODOLOGY

A survey instrument was developed to solicit information which will be used in the preparation of a directory on the types of technology used by practitioners in the field. The population for this study consisted of Adult and Community Education directors, Adult Literacy Center coordinators, and Correctional Education School Authority (CESA) personnel.

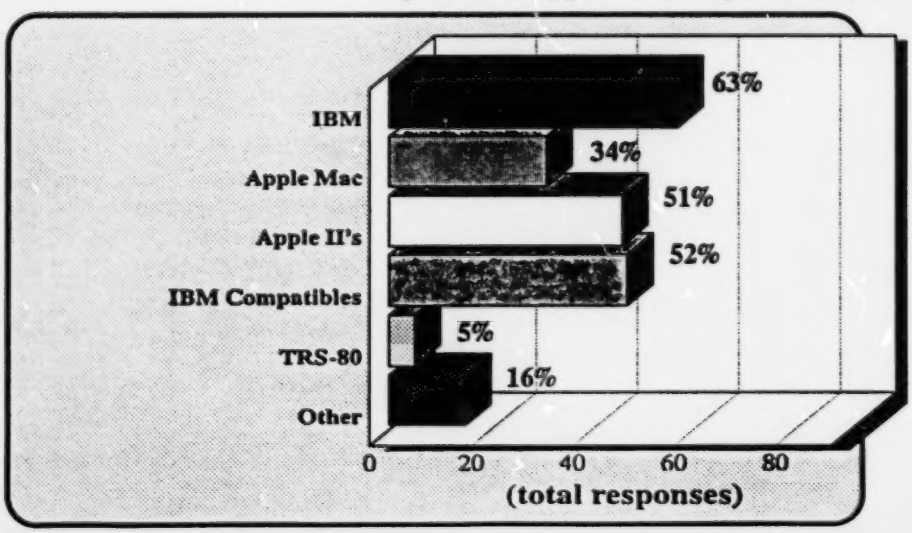
In the summer of 1992, the survey was disseminated to 100 Adult and Community Education directors and Adult Literacy Center coordinators (see appendix). Of the 100 surveys initially mailed, 92 were returned (92 %).

The data were compiled. After conversion of the data, the coded data were analyzed by computing the percentages. Note that in some cases the percentages total more than one 100% because respondents could select more than one option to answer the questions.

RESULTS

In reference to the types of computer hardware used for Adult and Community Education programs (Question #3, Figure 1.1), the responses were as follows: 63% IBM, 52% IBM compatibles, 51% Apple II's, 34% Apple Mac, 5% TRS 80, and 16% others.

Figure 1.1- Types of Computer Hardware



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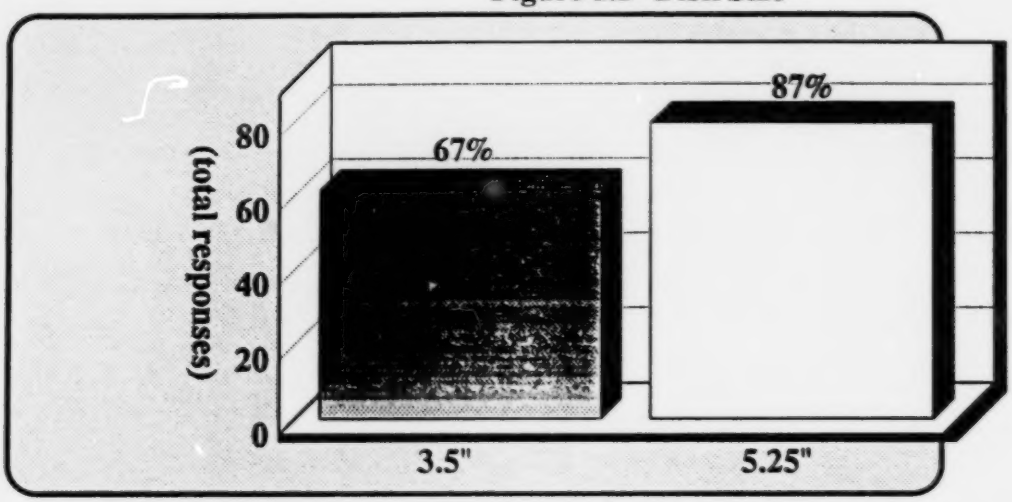
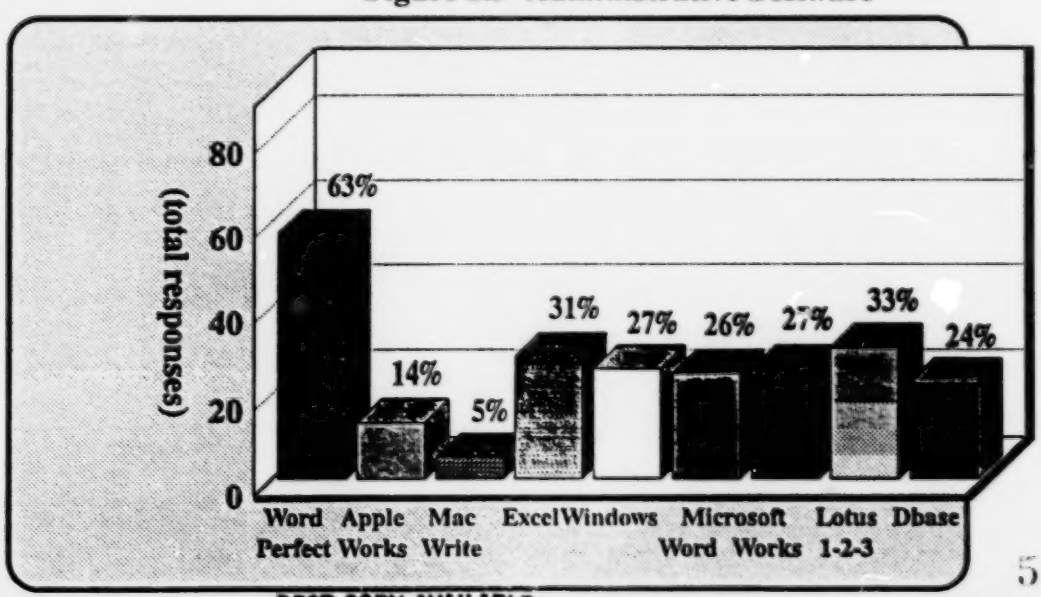
The results of the survey provided the Bureau of Adult and Community Education with an indication of the disk size most commonly used in the field. This result will facilitate the future distribution of information by disk instead of hard copy. Most of the respondents, 87%, reported that they use 5 1/4-inch diskettes, while 67% reported that they have 3 1/2-inch disk capabilities (Question #3, Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2- Disk Size



WordPerfect, with 63%, was shown to be the most popular of all administrative software packages used (Question #4, Figure 1.3). Other frequently used software packages include Excel, Lotus, Microsoft Word, Microsoft Works, Dbase, and MacWrite.

Figure 1.3- Administrative Software



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The most significant uses of computers (Question #5, Figure 1.4) were for instructional programs, 79%; record keeping, 56%; correspondence, 41%; registration, 36%; desktop publishing, 33%; and electronic communication, 15% (other uses constituted only 5%.)

Figure 1.4- Computer Uses

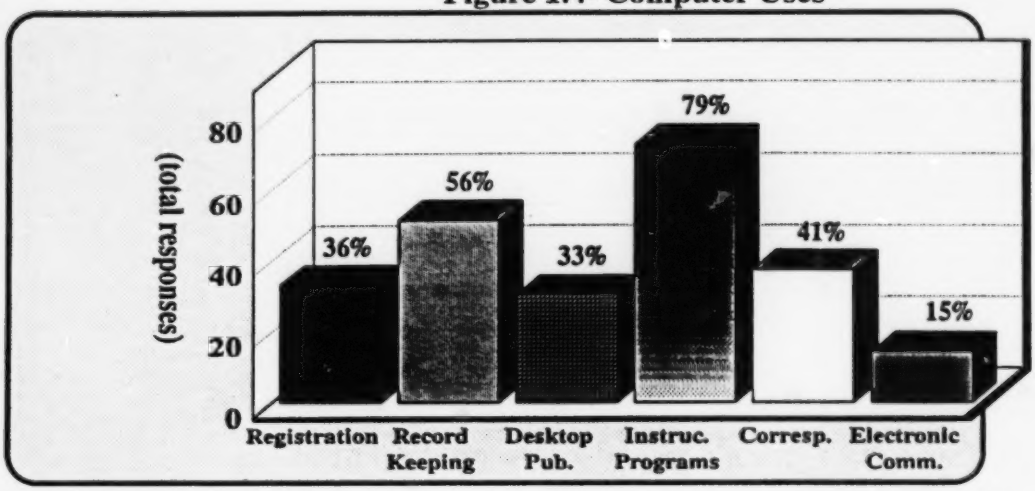
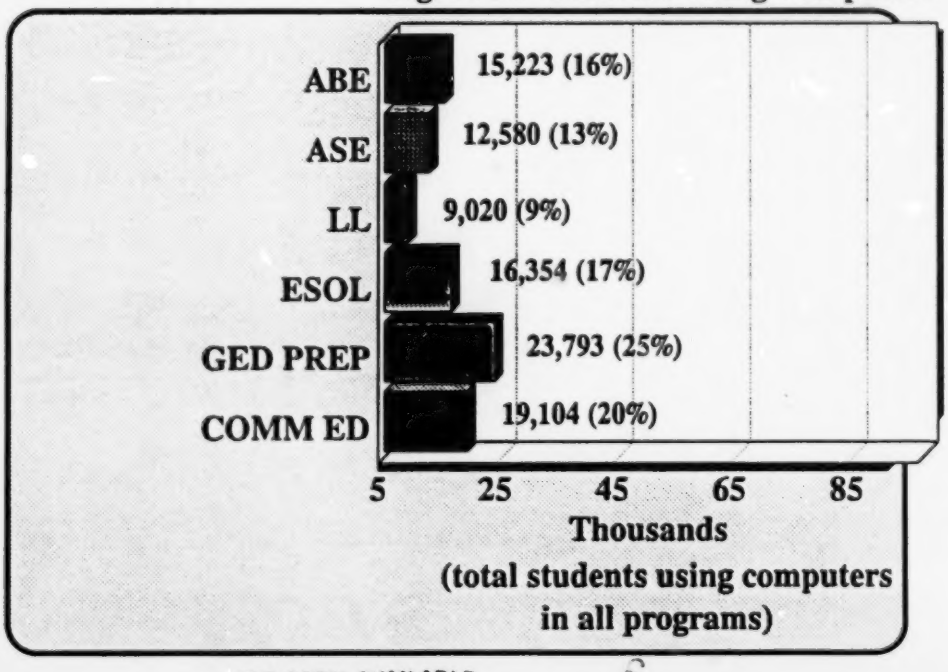


Figure 1.5 below indicates the number of students who are using computers in Adult Education programs.

Figure 1.5- Students Using Computers



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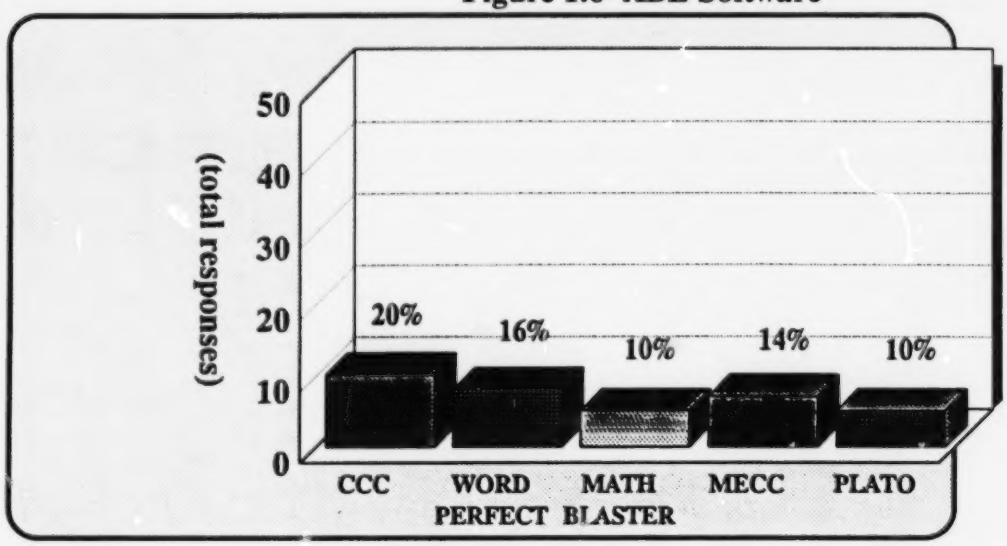
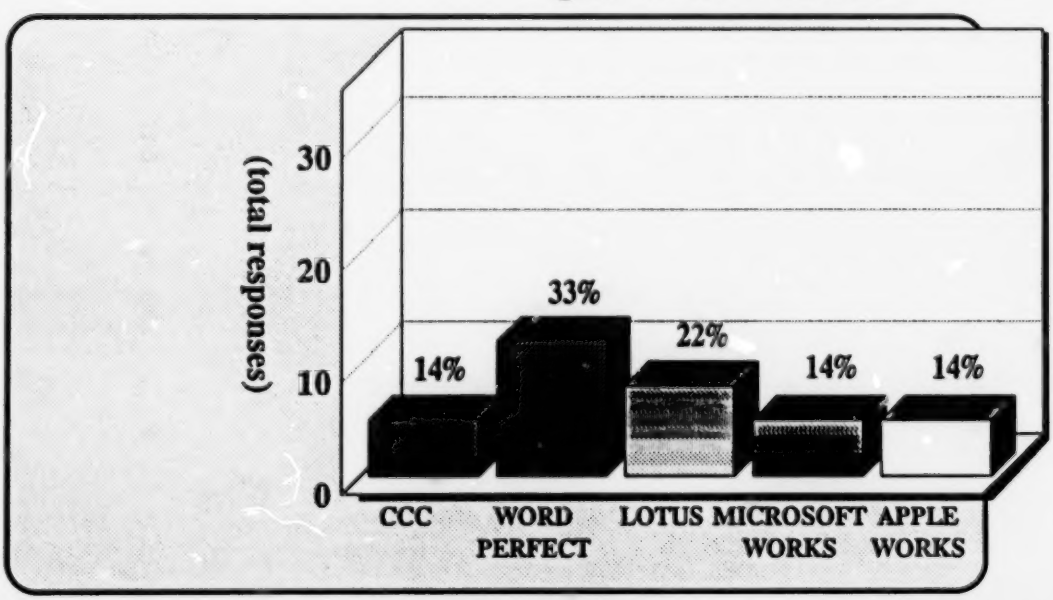
The software packages used for teaching Adult Basic Education (ABE) are as follows: 20% CCC, 16% WordPerfect, 10% Math Blaster, 14% MECC, and 10% Plato (Question #6, Figure 1.6).

Figure 1.6- ABE Software



For teaching Adult Secondary Education (ASE) the following software packages are used: 14% CCC, 33% WordPerfect, 22% Lotus, 14% Microsoft Works, and 14% Apple Works (Figure 1.7).

Figure 1.7- ASE Software



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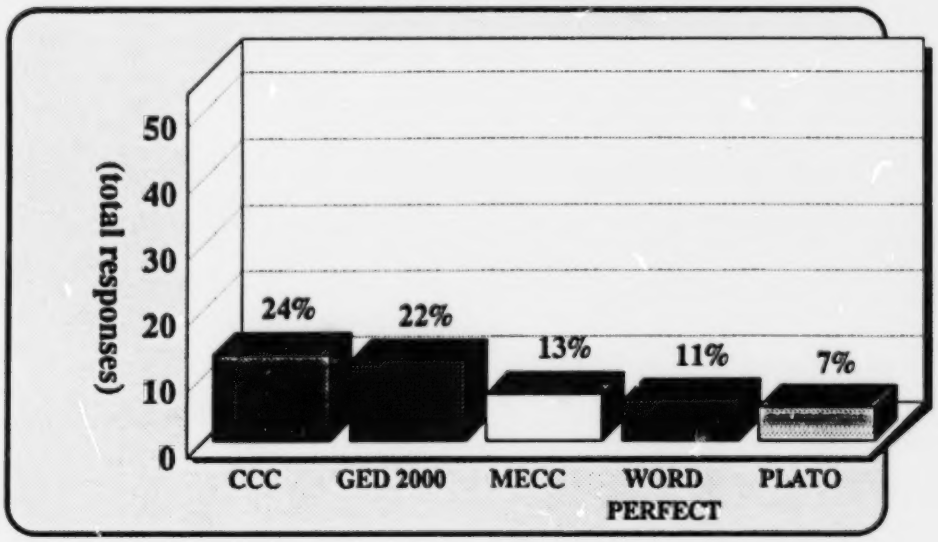
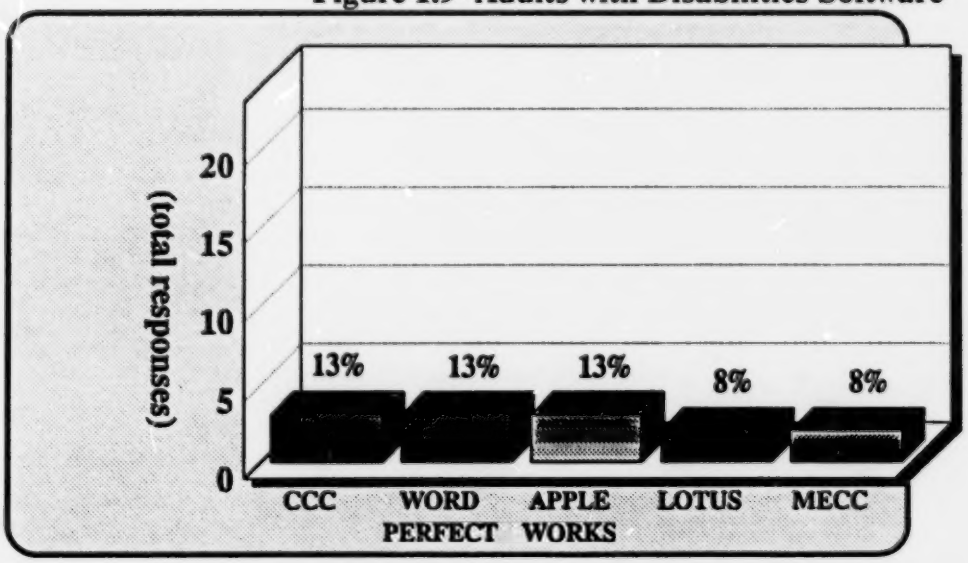
To prepare adults for the GED test, 24% are using CCC, 22% GED 2000, 13% MECC, 11% WordPerfect , and 7% Plato (Figure 1.8).

Figure 1.8- GED Software



To teach adults with disabilities, 13% are using CCC, 13% WordPerfect, 13% Apple Works, 8% Lotus, and 8% MECC (Figure 1.9).

Figure 1.9- Adults with Disabilities Software



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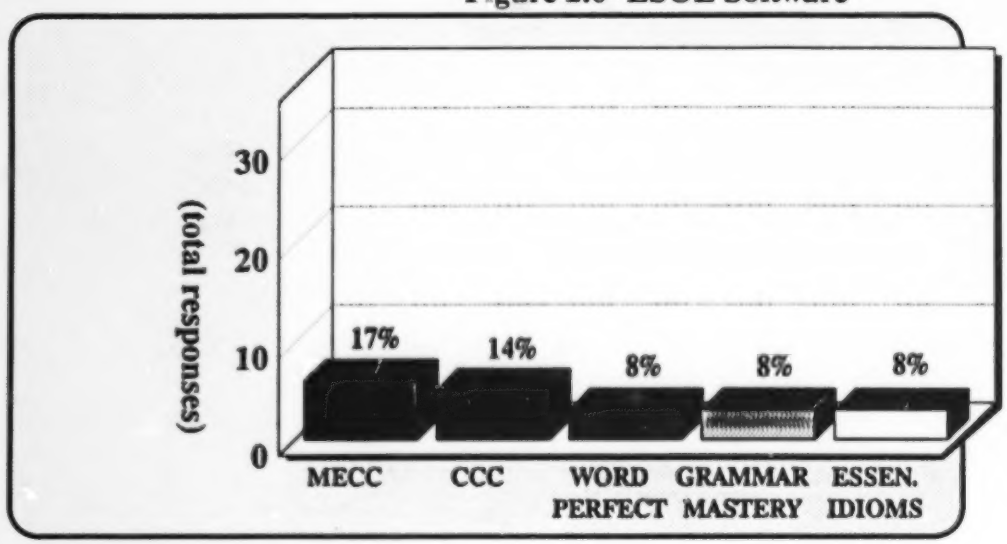
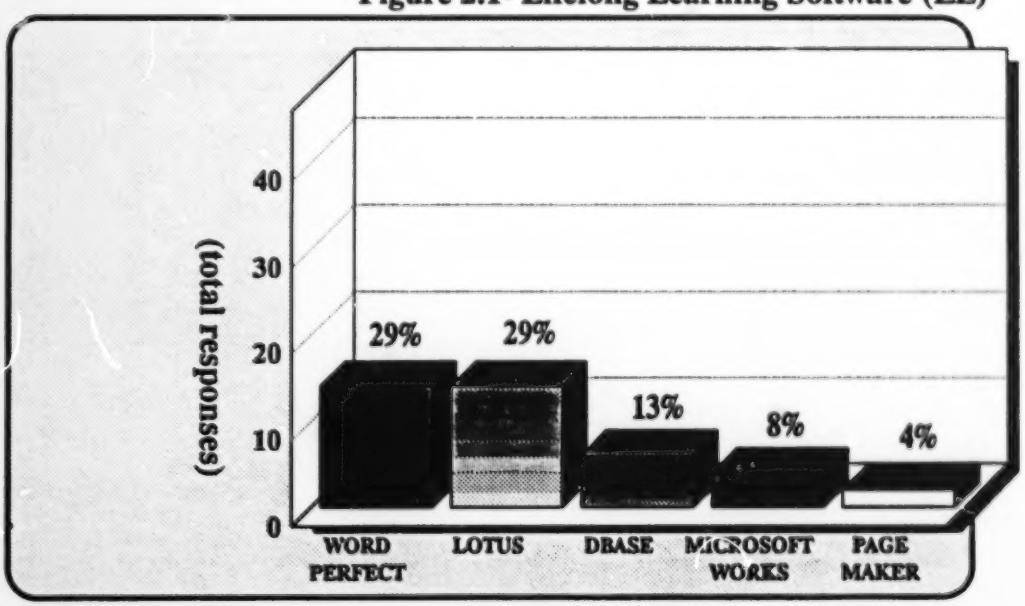
To teach English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), 17% reported using MECC, 14% use CCC, and 8% each use WordPerfect, Grammar Mastery, and Essential Idioms (Figure 2.0).

Figure 2.0- ESOL Software



In Lifelong Learning programs, 29% are using WordPerfect, 29% Lotus, 13% DBASE, 8% Microsoft Works, and 4% PageMaker (figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1- Lifelong Learning Software (LL)



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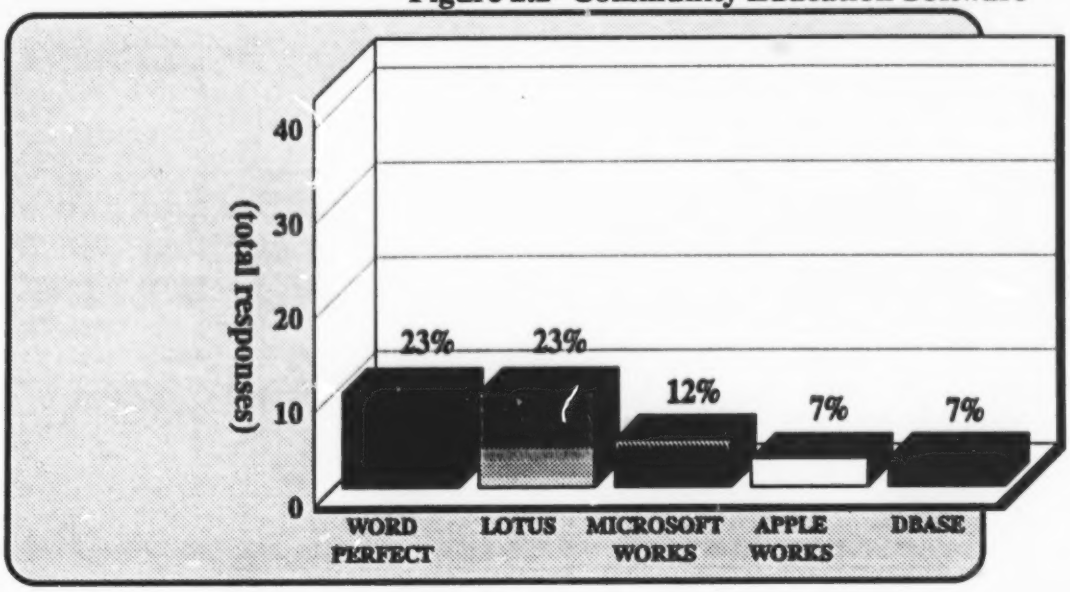
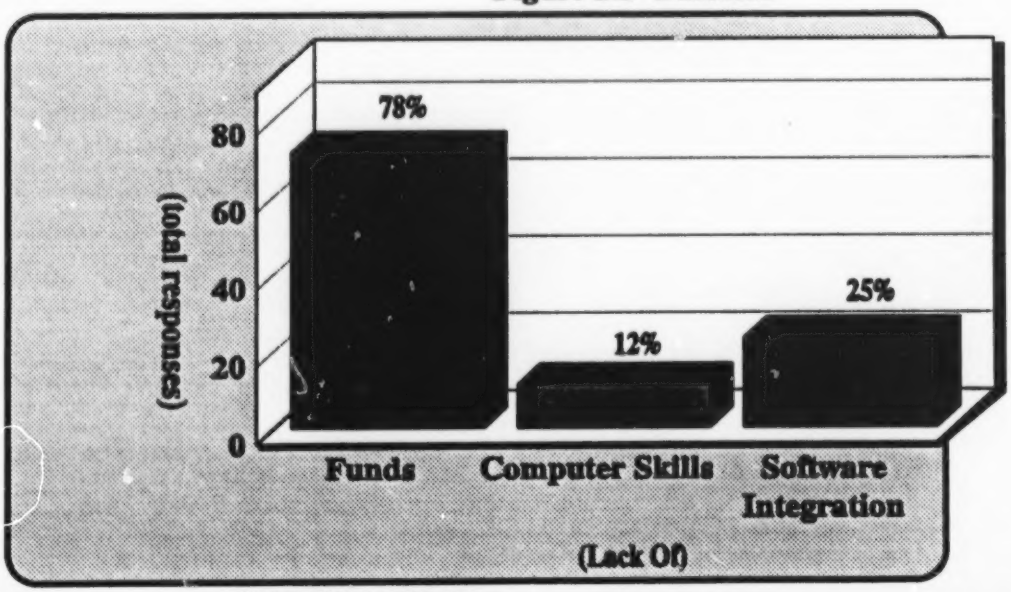
In Community Education programs, the results show that 23% are using WordPerfect, 23% Lotus, 12% Microsoft Works, 7% Apple Works, and 7% DBASE (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2- Community Education Software



The most significant barrier found by respondents (78%) is the lack of funding for hardware. While 25% of those surveyed indicated that they do not know how to integrate software into the lesson plans, the remaining 12% mentioned other barriers such as space or the instructor's lack of computer skills (figure 2.3).

Figure 2.3- Barriers



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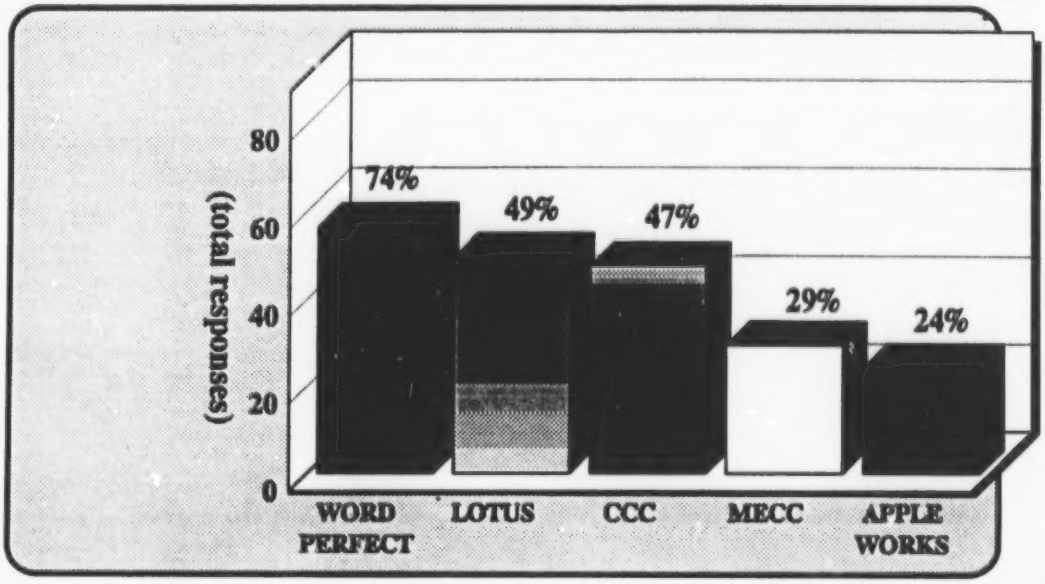
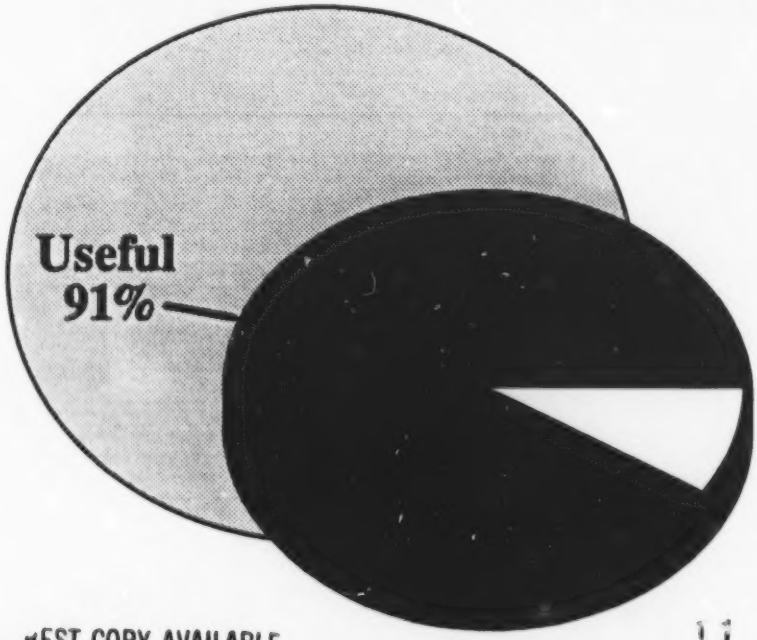
Overall, the most frequently used software packages for instructional purposes are WordPerfect 74%, Lotus 49%, CCC 47%, MECC 29%, and Apple Works 24% (Figure 2.4).

Figure 2.4- Frequently Used Software



The usefulness of computers as instructional tools was highly supported by 91% of the respondents (Figure 2.5).

Figure 2.5- Computers as Instructional Tools



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IMPLICATIONS

The National Literacy Act of 1991 appears to disregard funding for the purchase of hardware and software and for the upgrading of technology.

It is recommended that the results of this study be shared with the Adult Education Equipment Task Force for consideration and implementation. In addition, this study also demonstrates the need for in-service training and staff development so that practitioners can keep pace with technological advances as related to Adult and Community Education Programs.

GLOSSARY

WordPerfect - a software package used to create and edit documents.

Math Blaster - a software package used to teach basic math skills, especially to children.

Lotus 1-2-3 - a software package used to create ledgers and spreadsheets, produce graphs and charts representing numeric data, and analyze numeric data.

DBase - a software package used to collect data and create summary reports.

PLATO - a software package used for a wide variety of educational purposes, from chemistry to basic reading skills.

PageMaker - a software package used to create and edit very complex documents that may include pictures and other graphic images.

Microsoft Works - a software package including basic tools for word processing, spreadsheets, database management, and other applications in an easy-to-use system.

Excel - a software package used to edit and create ledgers and spreadsheets, create and edit charts and graphs of numeric data, analyze and report numeric data, and collect and report numeric data.

CCC- The Computer Curriculum Corporation provides instructional software packages that contain over 20 courses in Math, reading, language arts, science, and computer science. A unique feature of this software is its ability to analyze student performance on a weekly basis.

MECC- Minnesota Educational Computing Corporation provides software developed by the Minnesota Department of Education to teachers to assist them in teaching language arts, math and writing. Educational Agencies may pay the annual license fee in order to produce unlimited copies of the MECC software.

Essential Idioms- A software package used to teach students basic idioms.

GED 2000- A software package used to prepare students for the GED exam.

Apple Works- A software package used to teach word processing, spreadsheets, and data bases.

APPENDIX

Appendix A

Technical Assistance Response Form

The Bureau of Adult and Community Education is collecting information on the use of computer technology (hardware and software) used in Adult and Community Education programs in Florida. Please complete and return this technical assistance form before July1, 1992. Mail to: Dr. Shahrokh Massoudi, Program Specialist, Bureau of Adult and Community Education, 1244 FEC, 325 W. Gaines St., Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400 or fax it to (904) 487-6259.

SAMPLE

1. Name of the School Site:

Name of person filing out this questionnaire:
Title: _____
Agency: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____

2. Name of on-site computer contact person or expert: _____
Phone: _____
Fax: _____

3. What types of microcomputers are used for adult and community education programs:
(Please check all that apply)

- ○ IBM XT,AT,PS/2
- ○ Apple Mac
- ○ Apple II's
- ○ IBM Compatibles (Compac, Tandy, Dell, etc.)
- ○ TRS-80 II, III
- ○ Other: (Please list)

What disk size?

- ○ 5 1/4
- ○ 3 1/2

4. What general application software is used for administration?

- ○ WordPerfect
- ○ Apple Works
- ○ MacWrite
- ○ Excel
- ○ Windows
- ○ Microsoft Word
- ○ Microsoft Works
- ○ Lotus 1-2-3
- ○ dBase
- ○ Other: (Please list)

5. What is the most effective use for the computer in the Adult Education programs?

- ○ Registration
- ○ Record keeping
- ○ Desktop Publishing
- ○ Other: (Please list)
- ○ Instructional Programs
- ○ Correspondence
- ○ Electronic Communications

6. Please list the software packages used by your program.

Software	ABE (401)	ASE (402)	GED Prep (402)	ESOL 401/402	Disabled Adults (416)	LL (403)	Community Education

7. What are the major barriers to the increased use of computers?

- ○ Lack of funds
- ○ Lack of computer skills
- ○ Lack of software to integrate them into lesson plans
- ○ Other: (Please list)

8. Do you think the computer assisted instruction is a useful tool? Please Explain:

○ It is useful ○ It is not useful

9. Estimated number of students who used microcomputers as of April 30, FY 91-92:

_____ Adult Basic Education
_____ Adult Secondary Education
_____ Lifelong Learning
_____ ESOL
_____ GED Preparation
_____ Community Education

Please write any additional comments on the back.

Information and Technical Assistance Florida Department of Education

Mr. John Lawrence

Bureau Chief

Dr. Shahrokh Massoudi

Program Specialist
Bureau of Adult and Community Education
1244 Florida Education Center
325 West Gaines Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400
(904) 488-8201
Suncom: 278-8201
FAX: (904) 487-6259

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